

Six Facets of Understanding

Individuals who understand and can transfer their learning...

	Can Explain	Can Interpret	Can Apply and Adjust	Have Perspective	Have Empathy	Have Self-Knowledge
Description	Make connections, draw inferences, express them in their own words with support or justification; use apt analogies; teach others	Make sense of, provide a revealing historical or personal dimension to ideas, data, and events; make it personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and stories; turn data into information; provide a compelling and coherent theory	Use what they have learned in varied and unique situations; go beyond the context in which they learned to new units, courses, and situations beyond the school	See the big picture; are aware of, and consider, various points of view; take a critical or disinterested stance; recognize and avoid bias in how positions are stated	Perceive sensitively; can “walk in another’s shoes”; find potential value in what others might find odd, alien or implausible	Show metacognitive awareness; reflect on the meaning of new learning and experiences; recognize the prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that both shape and impede their own understanding; are aware of what they do not understand in this context
Question Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the key idea in ___? • What are examples of ___? • What are the characteristics/parts of ___? • How did this come about? Why is this so? • What caused ___? What are the effects of ___? • How might we prove/confirm/justify ___? • How is ___ connected to ___? • Why might happen if ___? • What are common misconceptions about ___? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the meaning of ___? • What are the implications of ___? • What does ___ reveal about ___? • How is ___ like ___ (analogy/metaphor)? • How does ___ relate to me/us? • So what? Why does it matter? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and when can we use this ___ (knowledge/process)? • How is ___ applied in the larger world? • How might ___ help us to ___? • How could we use ___ to overcome ___? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are different points of view about ___? • How might this look from ___’s perspective? • How is ___ similar to/different from ___? • What are other possible reactions to ___? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of ___? • What are the limits of ___? • What is the evidence for ___? • Is the evidence reliable? Sufficient? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would it be like to walk in ___’s shoes? • How might ___ feel about ___? • What was ___ trying to make us feel/see? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I know ___? • What are the limits of my knowledge about ___? • What are my “blind spots” about ___? • How can I best show ___? • How are my views about ___ shaped by ___ (experiences, habits, prejudices, style)? • What are my strengths and weaknesses in ___?

Six Facets of Understanding

	Can Explain	Can Interpret	Can Apply and Adjust	Have Perspective	Have Empathy	Have Self-Knowledge
Performance Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate • Derive • Describe • Design • Exhibit • Express • Induce • Instruct • Justify • Model • Predict • Prove • Show • Synthesize • Teach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create analogies • Critique • Document • Evaluate • Illustrate • Judge • Make meaning of • Make sense of • Provide metaphors • Read between the lines • Represent • Tell a story of • translate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt • Build • Create • Debug • Decide • Design • Exhibit • Invent • Perform • Produce • Propose • Solve • Test • Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze • Argue • Compare • Contrast • Criticize • Infer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be like • Be open to • Believe • Consider • Imagine • Relate • Role-play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of • Realize • Recognize • Reflect • Self-assess
Social Studies Performance Task Ideas	Provide conceptual clarification (e.g.; “freedom” compared to “license”; meaning of the term “third world”.	Develop an oral history on the significance of the 1960s using primary sources, and write a historical biography.	Design a museum exhibit on the causes and effects of early 20 th century immigration.	Compare British and French textbook accounts of the Revolutionary War with your textbook account.	Role-play a meeting of the minds (e.g.; Truman deciding to drop the atomic bomb).	Self-assess your involvement in class discussions and performances, and explain your patterns of participation.
Mathematics Performance Task Ideas	Study a common phenomenon (e.g., weather data). Reveal subtle and easily overlooked patterns in the data.	Do a trend analysis of a finite data set.	Develop a new statistic for evaluating the value of a baseball player in key situations.	Examine the differences when using various measures (e.g., mean, median) for calculating grades.	Read <i>Flatland</i> and a set of letters between mathematicians explaining why they fear publishing their findings; write a reflective essay on the difficulty of explaining new ideas, even “abstract” ones.	Develop a mathematical resume with a brief description of your intellectual strengths and weaknesses.
English/Language Arts Performance Task Ideas	Describe why a particular rhetorical technique is effective in a speech.	“What’s wrong with Holden?” Make sense of the main character in <i>Catcher in the Rye</i> .	What makes a “great book”? Make an audio-tape review of a favorite book for the school library.	Read and discuss <i>The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs</i> by A. Wolf.	Work in a soup kitchen, read a book by Charles Dickens and write an essay on the experiences of the homeless.	Attach a self-assessment to each paper you write reflecting on <i>your</i> writing process.
Science Performance Task Ideas	Link everyday actions and facts to the laws of physics, concentrating on easily misunderstood aspects (e.g., mass compared to weight).	Take readings of pond water to determine whether the algae problem is serious.	Perform a chemical analysis of local stream water to monitor EPA compliance, and present findings.	Conduct thought experiments (e.g., Einstein’s “What would the world be like if I were riding on a beam of light?”).	Read and discuss pre-modern or discredited scientific writings to identify plausible or “logical” theories (given the information available at the time).	Propose solutions to an ineffective cooperative learning activity based on what didn’t work in your group.